West Asheville Oral History

Mr. Bob Ingle
April 16, 1992

Interviewer: Rob Neufeld

INTERVIEW WITH BOB INGLE AT INGLE'S HEADQUARTERS IN BLACK MOUNTAIN, APRIL 16, 1992; INTERVIEWER, ROB NEUFELD

Preface

Both Bob Ingle's father, Elmer, and his grandfather, Frank, were independent grocers in Buncombe County. As a youth, Bob learned the family business, but also read Progressive Grocer and studied other stores in the Southeast. The world's first supermarket, King Cullen in Jamaica, New York, was established at the start of the Great Depression. It stressed self-service, large inventory, and low prices. Dixie Home Stores had come to Asheville as early as 1932; A&P Food Stores by 1937. By the 1950s, supermarkets exploded on the American scene. Colonial Stores established themselves in Asheville by 1957.

Bob Ingle, from the start, was set upon responding to contemporary trends and needs. He established his first supermarket in Biltmore on family property in 1963, and his second store in West Asheville at Patton Avenue and Leicester Highway in 1965. By the end of 1991, his company, Ingles Markets, Inc., owned 174 supermarkets; and in 1992 has gone about building six new ones, one of which is in West Asheville on Haywood Road. It also owns and operates Milkco, Inc., a milk processing and packaging plant in West Asheville, which produces Laura Lynn, Sealtest, Pet, and Biltmore products. Ingles Markets, Inc. sold stock and became a public company in 1987. Its headquarters and distribution center is in Black Mountain.

Bob Ingle's father's father, Frank P. Ingle, set up a general merchandise store at 37-39 North Main Street in Asheville when Asheville first became a city, in the 1890s. He and his wife, Mary Jane lived at 36 Seney St. Working alongside Frank for a while were Sarah and James B. Ingle. James ran the business for a while, from 1906 to 1919, while Frank sold real estate, operating out of the Revell Building. In 1912, Elmer began working as a clerk in the store. In 1919, Frank opened a new store at 453 Biltmore Avenue; and in 1921, James opened J.B. Ingle Grocery Company on Haywood Road in West Asheville. James had been a resident of West Asheville for some time already.

Elmer took over management of the Biltmore store in 1923 at about the time that his father married Amanda Zeta and moved to Forest Hill Drive in Kenilworth. In 1927, Elmer married Beulah, and a year later moved his store to 519 Hendersonville Road. At the time that the Depression hit, Fred C. Ingle stepped in to help out J.B. Grocery Co., but that business folded. Fred, a West Asheville resident, worked as the bookkeeper for Hayes & Hopson, auto suppliers on Pack Square, and then for A-G (Associated Grocers) Stores, Inc., a war-time outfit that attempted to improve delivery of products to independent grocers. In the late 1940s, Fred managed Mutual Distributing Company, another wholesaling operation devised by independent grocers, many of whom operated in West Asheville.

Bob Ingle enlisted in the U.S. Army to fight in Korea in 1954. His father was ailing; he returned to work in the store in 1956, and his father died. Bob sold the store and continued his

education at University of Miami. He worked as a salesman with Kraft Cheese Company, and, in 1962 returned to Asheville, as a married man, to work in Colonial Stores. The following year, with the support of his family and with help from a wholesaler and a contractor, he made his great leap into supermarkets, and the rest is well-documented history.

Transcript

Rob: Was Mutual Distributing Company an attempt to try to keep up with what was then the big store, A&P?

Bob: I think Mutual Distributing Company probably grew out of a warehouse operation called Associated Grocers; and I think Associated Grocers was formed during the forties. They went together to get better buying power to offset the Dixie Home and the A&P stores which were currently operating in Asheville. Associated Grocers' situation was that there was May's Market over in West Asheville, Williamson Brothers, and Mullinax, and J&J, and Giezentanner, and there was a fellow out here in Oteen. Then we had people like Roy Trantham in Biltmore--Trantham's Supermarket. Now, Roy didn't go into business until 1946 or '47, so he wasn't involved in that. Then there was the Asheville Fish Store, they had about five stores. A fellow named Sorrels ran [Southern Fish & Grocery]. They had one on Depot Street.

I think they [the independent grocers] felt like some of the members were getting preferred treatment with certain merchandise, and the other guys weren't getting their fair share. The word that they used for grocers, they called them independents. That's what they are, independents, always very jealous of each other. It's very hard to get them to cooperate in an associated environment. Out of Associated Grocers came Mutual Distributing Company, which was basically the same idea except in Associated Grocers, I think you had to put up money in order to let the wholesale house have money to build an inventory. You were actually a partner in that sense. I think in Mutual you didn't have to put up any money. They had enough money.

My dad sold out his store about 1945. He didn't go back into business until 1947. There was about an eighteen month period when he wasn't in business. He went and built a completely brand new store. Unfortunately, he patterned it after the store that he had in 1933. He didn't go out and find out what was new and build something a little more modern. He built it just like the store that he sold. He ran that store until 1956. 1956 was the time that I sold the store [on Hendersonville Road across from Cedar Cliff Road] out. The reason I sold the store out was because I had gotten back from Korea and I had the G.I. bill and I wanted to go to the University of Miami to finish college. That's what I did. My dad passed away in 1956 and my mother couldn't run the store, so I just sold it out.

Now, there were some other wholesalers in town during those

years, too. There was Thomas and Howard, which was a regional chain of wholesalers. Thomas and Howard was owned by the Jameson family, and they owned one in Greenville, South Carolina and they owned one in Asheville. They bought out the wholesaler in Biltmore called Slayden Fakes, grocery wholesales, and they started operating that. Then there was Oberton's(?) Cash Groceries Wholesale, which was located in Hendersonville. You see, there was quite a bit of competition among the wholesalers. Unfortunately, with this many people trying to get a little bit of business, [which accounted for] about a hundred dollars or two hundred dollars from each of them, there wasn't enough for any of them to really survive.

The chains were gaining a lot of business because they were building bigger stores and remodelling, and the independents were just sitting there just like it was. The only two that built new stores that were modern enough for the times were Harry Giezentanner on Merrimon Avenue and Bieman McKenzie up on Pack Square. He built a real nice store up there. He called it Asheville's Food Center, if I'm not wrong. They had a big write-up in the paper about it, showing all their equipment. Harry Giezentanner built one on Merrimon Avenue, and both those fellows still had a lot of credit and delivery, so that made it a real disadvantage.

You see, Ingle's Markets, Incorporated as we know it today really didn't start until 1963. There was a time lapse from '56 to '63 when I was down in Florida and finishing up at the University Miami, and I went to work with Kraft Cheese Company as a salesman for a while. I didn't really get back up here and go into business until 1963.

In 1956, we had three Colonial Stores open up at one time. They were based in Atlanta, Georgia. The three stores opened up the same day, a Wednesday. Then you had in this town in 1963 the three Colonial Stores, about five Winn Dixies, and six A&Ps. They controlled 93% of every dollar that was spent in Asheville. That was one of the hard things I had to overcome in trying to borrow any money on a local basis. They [the bankers] said, "Nobody ever made it in the grocery business in Asheville." It took me a long time, but I finally got it all together and got started in 1963.

Rob: How did you sell the bankers on this concept?

Bob: What I really had to do was borrow all the money my sister had, which was $5,000. I had to borrow all the money my mother had, which was about $10,000. And I had $7,000 of my own. And then we went down and mortgaged my mother's house with Asheville Federal Savings and Loan for $15,000. It had never been mortgaged. We got all that money together and that gave us enough money to build a building. We built a brand new building which was only 10,000 square feet, rather small by today's standards--our stores average about 33,000 square feet--then we went to a Savings and Loan over in Clyde, North Carolina and

borrowed a first mortgage on it, and that gave us enough money to make a down payment on the equipment. Then it was financed.

And we had a friendly wholesaler in Hickory, North Carolina --not any of the local wholesalers that we had talked about would put any merchandise into the store. Evidently, they did not think that we were going to make it either. But we had a friendly wholesaler down in Hickory, North Carolina that loaned us $20,000 worth of merchandise on a second mortgage on the building. That's actually the way we got started on our first store. So, you know, when you go back over that, there was absolutely nobody that we didn't owe money to. I owed money to my mother, the banks, to my sister, to the wholesaler, to the savings and loans.

Rob: It was a gamble of a lifetime.

Bob: Oh, yes. Everything was on the line. That's why when we opened up, we opened seven days a week and our hours were nine in the morning till eleven o'clock at night, and we were there every minute of the day trying to make that first store go.

Rob: Albert Fortune quotes John May as having said that you would never succeed. Didn't you try to get John May to buy the Biltmore Store? Wasn't he more closely involved than the other grocers?

Bob: You know, I don't really remember.

Rob: He was one of the local doubters, anyway.

Bob: We probably looked at that thing a lot of different ways before we ever got it going. Fortunately, the first store clicked. If you can get your first store to click--what we did in 1964, we actually doubled the size of it. We went from 10,000 square feet to 21,000 square feet.

Rob: So what did you know that the doubters did not know?

Bob: I think, under the situation that we were in, we had to do so much business just to make the payments. It wasn't a question of making money. It was a question of turning enough inventory to get the cash to be able to write the checks. That's what we were primarily doing was trying to establish a large cash flow. Our first week in that store, we did $9,000, the second week we did $9,500, the third week we did $9,500, and then it was all the way to September before we finally got that store up to $14,000 dollars a week, and then Winn Dixie was going to build a new store in South Park(?). I thought that would hurt us awful bad but when they opened up in September, our sales actually went up. We eventually got that store to doing $78,000 a week. We had it doing $33,000 a week when we doubled the size of it, and then we got right up to $78,000.

Rob: Your going there seven years after you sold your father's store--does that mean you were really not able to cash in on your former customers?

Bob: Oh, no.

Rob: You were starting from scratch. How did you pick that location?

Bob: I picked that location because that was where my father had some land and I could buy the adjacent land to join it--and that was the basis of picking that location. In 1965 in October, we opened our second store. Opening the first store in '63 in March and doubling the size of it in '64, then opening the second store on Patton Avenue, we were moving rather rapidly. In 1967, we got an opportunity to buy six Colonial Stores from that chain in Atlanta, which included three of the stores here in Asheville. Three stores in Asheville, and one in Black Mountain, and one in Marion and in Morganton, North Carolina. We were trudging farther and farther ahead. Also at that time, we opened up our Merrimon Avenue Store. Our store count was building rather rapidly.

Rob: How did you choose your West Asheville location?

Bob: I knew that was the best location on the highway because it was sitting up there on the intersection of Leicester Highway. Leicester goes twenty miles back through there and doesn't have much of a supermarket, but has a lot of people living there. That was a very easy location to pick.

Rob: The Smoky Park Bridge opened up in the early fifties.

Bob: That's right, about 1951.

Rob: It was about fifteen years after that that you established really what was the first big store in that area.

Bob: But, you see, Winn Dixie in Westgate, that was the best Winn Dixie in the whole Greenville chain. It was doing seventy-something thousand dollars a week at that time. It was a real good store. Of course, Westgate was a real vibrant place to shop. Westgate was the only place to shop in town. Myron Peterson in 1962 opened up the Sky City out there on Patton Avenue that was next to the A&P store. So moving right on down to Leicester Highway on the next corner, I knew that was a good hot location.

Rob: I guess what I'm asking is, here was a hot location. Probably other people recognized it as hot as well.

Bob: No, they didn't see it. Because what it was was a great big hill. An old farmer and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Amos, owned that property. What they had on the corner was an old SmoKo station. A SmoKo station was just kind of a filling station that didn't seem like it did a whole lot of business, but it hid the view of that property. I went up to Mr. and Mrs. Amos and asked them if they'd like to sell that property. They said, "Yup." I said, "Well, how much would you like for it?" He told me immediately, and I said, "I'll go down to the bank to see if I can borrow the money." That was just about the way the deal went. We got the property at a pretty good price. We had to spend about $110,000 taking the hill down. That was a lot of money back in 1965. But I was determined to get that store in there because I knew it would be a dynamite store, and it's always been a dynamite store.

You know, I was talking to you about our finally getting that number one store up to $78,000 a week, which was a lot of business at that time. We were selling merchandise at ten cents a can that sells for fifty-five cents today. You just figure five times that volume would be a lot. Well, this Patton Avenue store opened up and started doing $100,000 a week, which surpassed that first store and was one of the highest volume stores in the state of North Carolina. People came from miles around just to look at it, saying "How does the thing do so much business?"

Rob: Certainly, the grocery business changes from decade to decade.

Bob: My dad went into business in 1923, but my grandfather was in business--he had a little store across from St. Joseph Hospital. I remember as a four or five year old kid going in there. He opened up a big jar on the counter there and gave me a licorice stick--first time I ever had a licorice stick. Well, you know, your momma always gets mad at you if you come home with a licorice stick all over your mouth. We're really third generation grocery store.

Rob: The way your grandfather ran a successful business and the way your father ran a successful business is different from what you had to do in that first store of yours?

Bob: People back then thought about making a living. They didn't think about public corporations and a chain of stores and warehouses and all this. They went into business to serve the community and make a living. Maybe I had a little advantage of travelling around a little bit more and seeing how other people did it. We thought that we could build a large company, but we didn't anticipate it getting this large. We never thought we'd go over a billion dollars in sales. Ingle's Markets is about the fortieth largest food chain in the United States, so I guess that means the world. We had probably the fast track after getting

out of the 70s and over into the 80s and going public in 1987 right in front of the big stock market crash where it went down about five hundred points in one day. We went public about two weeks before that. So the stock didn't do very well because there were lots of bargains out there. We sold convertible bonds. We made extremely large deals with big insurance companies such as Metropolitan Insurance Company.

We had the ability to go out and raise cash. I guess that's the thing about all these little grocermen that you're talking about here--like May's and Williamson Brothers and Mullinax and J&J and Giezentanner and Roy Trantham and Bieman McKenzie--they didn't ever have the opportunity to go out and raise an awful lot of cash. You know, Drexel Burnham was our financier and our mortgage banker. The telephone rang one day, and I answered it, and the lady at the front desk said, "Mr. Ingle, there are three people here to see you from New York." "New York? What do they want?" "I don't know." I said, "Well, I'll go out and see them." So I bring them in. There comes three guys in in black overcoats and black hats. They said, "We're with Drexel Burnham out of New York City and we'd like to raise you some money." I said, "Okay." They said, "How much would you like?" Just trying to test them a little bit, I said "two hundred million dollars." And they said, "We can do that." And I said, "Okay." And we started talking about it, and about four months later, we were going public, and we raised thirty-nine million dollars with a public issue. Then one year after that, we went out and sold some subordinate debentures, and we raised fifty-two million dollars with that issue.

Then they had invited me to join the Drexel Burnham conference held in Beverly Hills--some people call it the predators' ball--as a speaker, and we were going to raise a hundred million dollars in what we call high yield securities, which people now refer to as junk bonds. Unfortunately, we never did get to that conference because Drexel went out of business before that time. That's why I say, I had the opportunity and the ability to raise the money. I'm not sure that that opportunity and ability is ever going to come back for a long time because Drexel, Mike Milliken, they were a different kind of people.

Rob: Part of the formula for success was being able to raise the cash by yourself with your family because it wasn't very possible to do that as a cooperative, to get together and pool resources.

Bob: Well, I guess that's the same thing you're doing when you sell stock. You're just not doing it particularly with other grocers.

Rob: But even when you sell stock, you have to have enough on your own to raise the confidence in your stock.

Bob: You have to have a pretty good story. You see, one of the

things that hindered us on selling our stock a little bit was that we had been in business twenty-four years. When you've been in business twenty-four years, you have a track record. If you don't have a track record, you can always tell them what you're going to do, and there's no history of what you have done. If you have a track record, they say, this is what you have done.

Rob: Well, certainly, your corporation would have to be considered one of the fastest growing and more successful corporations in the country. That's why Drexel Burnham came after you, I guess.

Bob: They just walked in. I didn't know they were coming.

Rob: Let me backtrack a little bit. That first store, you had the cash. Of course, cash alone doesn't make for success with the customers. Was it location, advertising, service, the good quality of your goods, the variety of goods that made it a popular store?

Bob: The first thing, it was a different type of store because nobody was staying open seven days a week and nobody was staying open till eleven o'clock at night. All the chain stores were closing at six-thirty. And on Friday night, they would stay open till eight. Now, this was not serving a large majority of the working public, who also worked until six-thirty at night and couldn't get to the stores. We survived primarily by being there when the customer needed us. You didn't have to get there by six-thirty. You could get there at eight, nine, ten o'clock at night. It didn't matter. That was one of the secrets to the success.

Now, the success of any business is always the people who are running the business. You get good people and you run it correctly and you give the service and the attention to your customer, because everyone wants to shop where they feel that they're liked and their business is appreciated. That's one of the problems that you get when you start getting into the 170-, 200-store chain, you cannot keep that same wonderful atmosphere in the store of "Hello, Mrs. Jones, how are you today? Let me help you with that baby up there." You see, you lose that. That's a disadvantage. But we still try to maintain it, but I know that it's not done as well as it should be done.

Rob: Coming from a family of grocers, you know what those small supermarkets used to work like.

Bob: That's right, it's a personal business. Any type of business that deals with the public, it's the same way. It doesn't matter whether it's banking or supermarkets or movie houses. It's a personal business. The two ingredients that you really need is good qualified people and you need cash to build these things. We were very fortunate in getting people, and of

course what we did is that we designed a system of paying every single employee in our company--and it still works today--a bonus according to the profits that we made. This made us unique compared to our competitors. I never could understand why anybody would go to work for the guy across the street because they could make twice as much money at Ingle's. But, still, the other people survived anyway.

Rob: How much copy-catting was there once other folks saw how successful you were being?

Bob: I'm still going into stores. Anytime I travel, I'm looking to see what other people are doing because one guy comes up with an idea and it works. If you see something you like, you carry it back, right?

Rob: Did you see some of the other stores like A&P and Winn Dixie begin to open up for longer hours?

Bob: Oh, yes, eventually they did.

Rob: But not very soon afterward.

Bob: No. They didn't bother me until 1965 when we opened up that second store, when they saw that we were going to make a move and became a threat to them. Then they started reacting.

Rob: So, you can move forward with your success for quite a while until someone recognizes you're a threat and begins to take action, maybe belatedly.

Did you discuss the grocery business with your dad?

Bob: Oh, yes. You know, one of the advantages of being born into a family business is that you get to go work when you're about five or six years old. So you talk to your dad all the time about the business and how things are going. The first jobs that you get in the store was usually sorting returnable bottles--all the Coca-Cola bottles go over here, and all the RCs go here, Pepsi-Colas go over there. He'd give me a penny a case for sorting out the bottles. I'd make about twenty-four cents a day. Then you'd do things like sweep down the floor. We had wooden floors in those old stores. We used to put oil on them. Why they didn't catch on fire and burn down, I'll never know. Sawdust in the meat department.

We had a big old cash register that sat there, and every clerk had a different number--A, B, C, D, and G, and that's the way they worked it. After one real busy Saturday day, I punched that, and I could just barely see over the top of the drawer there, and I said, "Dad, where's all the money?" He said, "Well, son, the money's over here." I said, "Over here, where?" He had a little stick here that had all these tickets on it that were credit tickets that they charged. I said, "There's no money

there." He said, "Well, they send the money in at the end of the month." That didn't look like the type of business that I wanted to be in as a small kid.

That's the difference between the independents and the chain. The chain never did extend the credit and the delivery, and the independent thought that he had to do that to be competitive with the other independents . But when he opened that store in 1947, he didn't have credit and delivery any more. In fact, that's probably the only way he got out of his credit and delivery association was by selling the little store.

Rob: People didn't miss having that?

Bob: That's right. Times changed, people changed. Some of the most motivating things to me that I never thought I'd see people doing is ladies pumping gas at the gas station. But you see, it's not only pumping the gas, but in their minds, they fell like they're saving money. By pumping their own gas; by not putting it on a credit card, by paying cash. It's a symbol of saving money, being thrifty. But those things seem to work out all right.

Rob: It used to be that grocers got much of their goods from local suppliers. There was good beef right in West Asheville, and, of course, you have your own dairy now. A lot of the produce came from local farms. That has changed, hasn't it?

Bob: That has changed quite a bit. Back then, you didn't have a big volume of business. But, you know, when you're doing twenty five million dollars a week, you have to have large supplies of lettuce and tomatoes and so forth; you have to buy in large quantities to get it through.

Rob: Is it possible to have both?

Bob: Oh, yes. We will still buy from many farmers who come to our stores. The manager writes them a draft right there. We can not depend on them to supply us that much merchandise if we were going to run sweet potatoes on sale or something like that. We would need so many cases of it that we'd have to pre-buy to be sure that we were going to have the products.

Rob: Nancy May thinks that folks had different senses of taste back in the days when they were operating, that people came in and they were much pickier about what cuts of meat they wanted and how they wanted it cut.

Bob: I think we have probably expanded tastes now because back then we didn't sell but one kind of cheese and that was old hoop cheese. They called it rat cheese or one thing or another. I bet you we were one of the first people to put in mozzarella, provolone, gorgonzola cheese and so forth. Even down to just a

simple cheese like swiss, it wasn't sold very much--and muenster and Monterey Jack.

I guess everything that I did blended in secretly and I didn't know it. One of the things was working with Kraft down in Miami. Miami, being such a diversified mixture of a lot of different people, had exposed you to cream cheese and Gouda cheese, and what would sell in this area and five miles down the road, where it was a completely different market.

Rob: Tell me a little bit about your family going back to your grandfather even beyond. How far back do you go in this area?

Bob: The first record that we have was for a fellow named Michael Ingle. He came down here in about 1771. He came down here and bought a five hundred acre farm off of Leicester Highway. That's where the old County Home is, Erwin School. He was from Westchester, Virginia. That was the first thing that I know about him because that became public record.

Back then, everybody tried to have the largest family that you could because that's the way you got the help to run the farm. As it goes on down, he had two twin boys, Anderson and Andrew. One of them had my grandfather, who was Franklin Pierce Ingle. Franklin Pierce Ingle had Elmer Ingle. All of them had large families. In 1898, Franklin Pierce Ingle sold a farm in Leicester and moved to Orange Street in downtown Asheville. He had a real estate office located in that old building [Drhumor Building] that used to be the Wachovia Bank right on the corner of Church Street and Patton. And he had a furniture company down on Broadway. He had a grocery store located across from St. Joseph Hospital.

My father went into business in 1923. His stores were always on the Hendersonville Highway. His first store was across from the Biltmore School, and his second store was right up from that somewhat, and his third store was across from Cedar Cliff Road.

Rob: Grocers were always real centers of communities, general merchandise stores where everyone came and shared news.

Bob: The grocerman was a well respected person in the community because basically everybody in the farm era did business on credit and you had to wait till the crops came in to sell the crops. That's when they paid off the bills. He decided that they were going to get credit or that they didn't get credit. There weren't a lot of other types of businesses available at that time.

Rob: It's too bad your dad didn't get to see how successful you have become.

Bob: How do you know?

Rob: You said your dad died in 1956?

Bob: It doesn't mean that he's not still there. [joining in laughter]

Rob: Okay. Okay, if you could hear him talk...

Bob: He'd say, "What are you doing that for."

Rob: Would he say, "Okay, son, you were right"?

Bob: Well, we used to have a lot of discussions about this. You know, he had that store that was twenty-two feet wide and sixty feet deep. I was always reading The Progressive Grocer and trying to figure out these trade magazines that tell you how you could do things. He'd say, "Well, you could build a bigger store he." And I would sit down and start drawing out store plans--where we were going to put the produce and where we were going to put the dairy. The store plan that I was drawing back then were for 4,000 square feet. Then I take it to show it to him, and he'd say, "A woman would have to walk a hundred feet to get a quart of milk."

I guess when I was about sixteen years old, my dad was in pretty bad health and I told him, "Okay, I'll run this store if you go home and not come up here until September when I go back to school." So he went home. I never will forget. We got in there, and we shined up the floors and dusted up everything, just worked on it real good, and we doubled the business that summer.

Afterword

As a young man, around age 16, Bob Ingle made a study of grocery stores. He visited stores in the southeast to get ideas. Particularly memorable were the legendary grocer Caz Walker in Knoxville and also J.S. Myers. Later in life, with established success in supermarkets, he applied the same kind of study to a different kind of business. He purchased the Sealtest Dairy, hired consultants, reviewed the field, and increased milk production ten times in a few years. Now, Milkco, Inc. produces milk, juice, and spring water, and supplies Ingles as well as other stores.

Ingles Markets, Inc. has expanded into five states. Its headquarters is in Black Mountain. Two of its newest stores are in North Asheville and West Asheville. Milkco is in West Asheville. Employees participate in a profit-sharing program. Bob Ingle, with strong local roots, stays moored in Buncombe County. This is very much not the pattern of business success here. Most often, big developers come from the outside; or begin their success here and then invest heavily elsewhere.